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AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

*By Philip Marshall Brown, Assistant-Professor of International Law and Diplomacy, Princeton University;
formerly American Minister to Honduras*

Since 1906 Central America has had two wars, three successful revolutions and five abortive uprisings, not including several conspiracies to assassinate the President of Guatemala or recent plots in Nicaragua for the overthrow of the revolutionary government which supplanted the Zelaya régime.

During this turbulent period the policy of the United States has developed by progressive steps from simple mediation, to direct intervention in the internal affairs of these republics. Our government has been almost incessantly occupied with the difficult task of trying to reconcile their differences, head off revolutions, avert war and facilitate the return of peace. We have come to realize that in order to prevent intervention on plausible grounds by European powers, the obligation of securing more stable conditions in Central America for the protection of all interests, logically devolves on the United States. This has become a most embarrassing problem and we are constantly reminded that:

When constabulary duty 's to be done,
The policeman's life is not a happy one.

In June 1906, President Roosevelt with the coöperation of President Diaz acted as mediator between Guatemala on the one side, and Salvador and Honduras on the other, to terminate the brief war then in progress. The treaty of peace signed on board the American gunboat *Marblehead* submitted all differences to the arbitration of the two mediators and, moreover, invoked their moral guarantee for the fulfillment of the provisions of the treaty. This direct recognition of

the obligation of the United States to mediate and intervene in their affairs was assented to by all of the five republics with the exception of the government of President Zelaya, who desired a free hand for the carrying out of his ambitious schemes to dominate Central America.

The friendly mediation of the United States was insufficient to deter Zelaya from making war in February, 1907, against the government of President Bonilla in Honduras though it was able to prevent the conflict's spreading to Salvador and Guatemala. American warships actively intervened on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Honduras to protect foreign interests and prevent the needless destruction of life and property. In August of the same year, the American government was able by strenuous diplomatic representations to avert war between Nicaragua and Salvador. But it was evident that more definite and effective measures would have to be adopted to preserve peace in Central America.

On the initiative of President Roosevelt, a peace conference of the five republics was held in Washington from November 13 to December 20, 1907. The work of this conference, consisting of several conventions on various subjects, was received with considerable optimism. It was believed by many that the basis had been laid for permanent peace. The key to the whole structure was the Central American Court of Justice to which all controversies of whatever nature were to be brought for final adjudication. It was heralded as a triumph for the cause of compulsory arbitration between nations; and Mr. Carnegie was induced to provide the court with a beautiful building at Cartago, Costa Rica. Those familiar with conditions in Central America, however, were not misled by the palliative measures adopted by the Washington conference. They realized that remedies on paper, without provisions for practical application and enforcement, were nothing but mockeries. The first decision of the Court of Justice, in a controversy between Honduras and Guatemala, was greeted with general derision. It was evident that the composition of the court was largely political; and that no means existed for enforcing

respect for its decisions. Conditions in these countries continued as disturbed as ever and Zelaya showed his cynical contempt for the Washington conventions by launching a filibustering expedition against Salvador in February, 1909.

By this time the American government was thoroughly convinced that the Washington conventions were of no value unless literally *enforced* and it reluctantly came to the conclusion that it must be prepared to forcibly prevent any further depredations by the Zelaya government. This decision was a momentous departure from the policy of non-intervention hitherto scrupulously observed, though it was the logical step in the fulfillment of the obligations of the United States, not only in behalf of all foreign interests, but also towards the people of Central America.

The revolution on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua in October, 1909, and the unjustifiable execution of the two Americans, Cannon and Groce, by order of Zelaya, compelled the United States to again intervene directly in Central American affairs. Zelaya was obliged to flee and the revolutionists were able ultimately to triumph. Another development in American policy was the agreement of our government to assist the new government in Nicaragua in the rehabilitation of the finances of that country.

A treaty was negotiated with the Nicaraguan government by Secretary Knox, giving the United States the right, as in Santo Domingo, to act virtually as the receiver and guardian of the customs revenues. Although this treaty was not ratified by the Senate, the arrangement itself was carried through and American officials designated by the United States now control in large part the finances of Nicaragua. Furthermore during a formidable revolution in August and September of 1912, the United States landed troops in Nicaragua at the request of the Nicaraguan Government for the announced purpose of protecting American lives and property, maintaining a legation guard, and preserving free communication with the legation. The national railroad which had been hypothecated as guarantee of an American loan to the government, was operated under the protection of American soldiers. A considerable force was

dispatched to Managua, the capital, and actually aided the government to repel and frustrate the revolution, which otherwise would have in all probability succeeded. Several American soldiers were killed during these operations.

The government at Managua, which owed its continued existence to American support, subsequently signed another treaty with Secretary Knox, whereby Nicaragua agreed to allow the United States the sole rights to the construction of any canal across Nicaragua, as well as a coaling station in the Gulf of Fonseca in return for assistance for the rehabilitation of its finances. This treaty has been approved by President Wilson's administration, and is still awaiting action by the Senate.

The formidable revolution headed by Ex-President Bonilla, which threatened to sweep the whole of Honduras in February of the present year, was again the occasion for the direct intervention of the United States. British and American marines were landed at Puerto Cortes which was declared neutral ground where hostilities would not be permitted. The inland town of San Pedro Sula, at the end of the railroad leading from Puerto Cortes, was also occupied and administered by the joint forces. The two rival factions, that of the government and that of General Bonilla, were notified that further disturbance and bloodshed would not be allowed and that some peaceful solution of their differences should be found. The apparently happy result of this intervention was the choice of a provisional president agreeable to both factions and a peaceful change of government with the prospect of an orderly, free election in the near future. The department of state at the same time announced the readiness of the United States to lend its good offices in support of certain measures for the refunding of the national debt of Honduras.

A treaty similar to the earlier treaty originally negotiated with Nicaragua, was also negotiated by Secretary Knox with Honduras, but likewise failed of ratification. The government of Honduras has since been endeavoring to find a way to meet its foreign indebtedness without being compelled to resort to an American receivership.

From the preceding rapid survey of recent events in Central America, two important facts are to be emphasized: first, that from a policy of scrupulous non-intervention in the affairs of these republics, the United States has been unwillingly lead into a policy of direct intervention; and second, that these interventions have become as startlingly frequent as they have become increasingly embarrassing in their nature. The question which naturally arises at this point is whether it is fitting and necessary that the attention of our government should be so constantly occupied with the domestic concerns of these countries: whether this "constabulary duty" of keeping the peace between, and even within, these states, can long be maintained without great embarrassment and disagreeable complications: whether, in sum, intervention in their internal affairs is the only possible solution of the problem.

Certain of the delegates at the Washington conference of 1907 signed the conventions with frank misgivings. They felt that such measures were only of a temporizing character and that the conference had failed in its opportunity to adopt a definite, radical remedy for the political ailments of Central America. In a special statement submitted to the Conference, the delegates from Honduras and Nicaragua expressed their doubts as follows:

We hope that the establishment of the Central American Court of Justice, agreed upon in the most important of our conventions, shall for the time being be the key to our political structure and shall remedy to a great extent our evils and shall prevent war in the future. We believe, however, that it does not suffice to satisfy the sentiment and aspirations of the Central American people, and that within a short time it will be felt, through the free trend of opinion and through the obvious relation of our public needs, how essential is a more intimate and complete amalgamation (*Foreign Relations, 1907, p. 727*).

In a separate statement the Honduran minister for foreign affairs also declared:

. . . . proceeding with loyal frankness, we must agree that if it is indeed true that by the creation of that court we have taken an advanced step toward the wellbeing and the good name of the countries we represent, by this step alone we have not assured the

positive and fruitful peace of Central America. . . . In this sense and obeying impulses of the most sincere patriotism, I make known here the profound conviction which continual political deceptions have rooted in my mind, that the union of the five republics in one single nation becomes necessary as the only saving means that is to lead our peoples without new obstacles or anxieties along the same path of progress that has led the United States and Mexico to the height of prosperity they now enjoy (*Foreign Relations*, 1907, p. 722).

With earnestness and ability the representatives from Honduras and Nicaragua labored to convince the other delegates of the supreme necessity of bringing about the union of the five republics. They pointed out that the re-establishment of the federation of Central America was the fundamental feature of their political existence, so acknowledged and declared in several of their constitutions. They insisted that no great sociological or other differences existed between the states of Central America: that "Central American wars have never been armed conflicts between peoples, but between governments: that no territorial conquests have ever taken place: no war indemnities or humiliating reparations have ever been imposed by one people upon the other as an abuse of victory." They drew attention to "the opposition of interests, of political tendencies and reciprocal jealousies in matters of predominance" in the Philadelphia Convention of 1787: how "some states had their social status organized according to democratic principles: in other states a powerful aristocracy reigned supreme: some were agriculturists: others were devoted to industrial pursuits: some favored slavery and others had marked aversion for it:" how the Philadelphia Convention, "believing that all those differences were not incompatible with the political union, devoted its efforts to find a rule of law to harmonize all opposing tendencies, systems, and interests, and to attain the prevalence of the Union over all opposition."

These arguments were of no avail and the majority of the delegates at the Washington conference summarized their views as follows:

. . . . while they consider the political union of Central America as the greatest and noblest aspiration of patriotism, they likewise think that the circumstances and conditions in which the Central American people find themselves at the moment are not propitious to decree national reconstruction, which, in order that it may be durable and solid, requires that their economic, moral, political and material elements shall have been harmonized.

They do not think therefore that it is opportune to discuss in the present conference a project for the immediate establishment of a union, but solely those measures which will tend toward preparing in a stable manner for this union, strengthening their means of communications, establishing a coasting ship commerce, linking together the economic and social interests of the people of the Republics, unifying their customs and tax laws, and encouraging the frequent meeting of Central American conferences. . . . The steps here taken toward making peace certain in Central America, toward guaranteeing security for capital and labor, toward improving their elements of production, their social interests, and their initiative in self-government, will contribute in no small part towards this end (*Foreign Relations, 1907, p. 672*).

Before testing the soundness of this point of view it is desirable to recapitulate briefly the main facts regarding the old Central American federation as well as the various fruitless attempts for its restoration. When the Spanish provinces of Central America seceded peacefully in 1824, they naturally gravitated together in a loose federal union, following the traditions of the "Audiencia Real" of Guatemala under which they had previously been grouped. During the latter years of Spanish rule, especially after the Constitution of 1812 which was signed by deputies from the five provinces, they had enjoyed a large measure of self-government. Each province and town was at liberty to elect its own "ayuntamiento" or council. In fact, it may fairly be asserted that at no subsequent time has Central America had as great privileges of self-government as during the latter years of Spanish domination. . . . Owing, however, to this strongly developed provincial sentiment, to the extremely loose federal form of union and to the intense rivalries of political leaders for pre-dominance both in the federation and in the separate states, this union proved to be a fiction and was dissolved after a nominal existence of fifteen years. The wonder is that it lasted as long. There was no external pressure in the form of a common enemy, nor was there a deep sense of community

of interests to hold the states together. Their separate existence for the past seventy years, with almost incessant wars and revolutions, has only served to retard their development and foster prejudices which have no solid grounds on which to rest. In their division has been their weakness.

Since 1839 efforts to restore the union have been made from time to time; and whenever the project is suggested it is natural that sceptics should object that, while the idea is laudable, it is impossible of realization. This pessimistic point of view, however, is open to the charge of superficiality for the reason that, while it is true there have been various attempts to re-establish the union, in actual fact, there never has been any serious, well calculated undertaking, properly supported in such a way as to guarantee success. It is worth while, therefore, to consider briefly certain of these movements for union, which represent the three methods usually employed: namely, that of diplomacy under the initiative of the United States, in 1874, 1881 and 1883, that by force of arms, resorted to by President Barrios in 1885, and that through alliance, attempted by the presidents of Honduras, Nicaragua and Salvador in 1896.

In 1874 the American minister to Central America was instructed to use his good offices to bring together the presidents of the five republics in order to settle existing differences and lay the foundations of a permanent union. Minister Williams' efforts in this direction, were, however, without definite result. The diplomatic discussions produced little more than a platonic recognition of the desirability of the union. The matter was taken up again in 1881 and 1883. General Grant in his reception of the diplomatic representative from Guatemala and Salvador in August, 1880, expressed his sincere hope for the federal union of Central America. Secretary Blaine in a comprehensive dispatch to the American minister at Guatemala, under date of May 7, 1881, manifested the keen interest with which the United States viewed all attempts to establish a union. He also indicated that the government at Washington would be gratified to learn of "some directly practicable method by which the United States could aid in the establishment of a

strong and settled union between the independent republics of Central America." The subject was again recurred to in 1883 but the diplomatic negotiations were of a purely tentative character.

In 1885, General Rufino Barrios, president of Guatemala, a man of commanding personality, who clearly understood the needs of Central America, attempted to bring about the union by coercive measures. After vain efforts of a pacific character to persuade the other states to join together, he proclaimed the union; placed himself at the head of his troops and summoned the remaining republics to give their immediate adherence. In the first battle with the Salvadorian army, Barrios was killed, and with him ended all hope of accomplishing the union through the force of arms.

The last attempt to restore the union was in 1896 when the presidents of Honduras, Nicaragua and Salvador united to form the Greater Republic of Central America. Neither Guatemala nor Costa Rica would join: the former apparently from motives of distrust, and the latter because of its traditional policy of isolation. Though recognized by the United States, this greater republic was hardly more than a fiction. It was essentially a personal alliance of the rulers of the respective republics; and was dissolved by mutual consent after a nominal existence of three years. As was sensibly remarked by General Regalado of Salvador, whose opposition wrecked the scheme, "This union is the work of a few men, not the desire of the people."

Of the three methods employed to establish the union; namely, force, alliance and diplomacy, the latter alone has not been thoroughly tested. The United States, though committed in principle to the ideal of the union, has taken no positive steps in this direction. It has contented itself, as already indicated, with expressions of sympathy with the project and tentative negotiations designed merely to sound the sentiments of the different Central American governments. In fact, since the *pourparlers* of Secretary Blaine begun in 1881 and abandoned in 1883, the idea of restoring the union through diplomatic means has almost entirely remained in abeyance. In the meantime, the United States

has felt compelled to seek the maintenance of peace and the remedy for the ills of Central America through friendly mediation and constabulary measures, and has now arrived at the point of positive intervention in the internal affairs of these republics. In spite of the inevitable failure of such a temporizing policy, it may be admitted that it was doubtless necessary to exhaust all possible expedients, in dealing patiently and cautiously with so abnormal a situation, in order to demonstrate conclusively their entire inadequacy and the necessity of a thorough, statesmanlike solution of the problem.

It can hardly be denied that intervention in the domestic concerns of these countries is as repugnant to our American ideals as it is ineffective in results. It is objectionable first, because it is not the business of the United States to be occupied with the internal affairs of other states; second, because it would prove extremely embarrassing through financial arrangements, however desirable in themselves, or through any other assumed obligations, to become responsible in any way for the administration of any of these countries; and third, because any intervention in derogation of their sovereign rights under international law, arouses the suspicions and apprehensions of these republics as well as of other Spanish-American states.

This policy has been ineffective because it ignores the root of the whole trouble; namely, the separate existence of states too small to thrive alone, embroiled constantly in petty dissensions originating, usually, in the personal rivalries of their respective rulers. The time would now seem to have arrived for our government to consider seriously whether the union of these five republics into one solid, self-sufficient state would not prove to be the most effective and satisfactory remedy for a condition of affairs which loudly calls for drastic treatment.

The conventional argument against the union is that previously quoted from the report of the majority of the delegates of the Washington conference; namely, that the people of Central America are not yet prepared for union, that it is first necessary to bring them into intimate contact through

the construction of railroads, etc., etc. This is undoubtedly the ideal process from the academic point of view but it is so painfully slow and the results so disheartening, that one is led seriously to question whether such a process will ever really prepare these countries for union. The efforts of the Washington conference in that direction seem to have been barren of results. In regard to the building of railroads, certain of these republics are quite unable to assume the financial burden of constructing the important links required to bring them together, nor does such construction offer sufficient inducements for the employment of private capital. The finances of several of these countries are in a deplorable condition; and their national resources have been recklessly exploited as well as mortgaged for many years to come. No long period of normal peace has prevailed uninterruptedly in any of them, with the sole exception of Costa Rica, whose peculiar conditions differentiate her in some ways from the rest of Central America. Honduras, equal in size to Pennsylvania, with a population of 500,000, a total revenue of \$1,000,000, and a national debt of \$6,000,000, has had two wars, three revolutions and several uprisings within the past seven years. It seems preposterous that Central America, possessing a total area slightly larger than California and one-fourth that of Mexico, with a population of less than 4,000,000, presenting no greater differentiations than Maine and Arizona—a people, in fact, essentially one in customs, sentiments and common interests—should be cursed with the burden of five distinct, sovereign republics.

Had Virginia and Massachusetts refused to unite in 1789 because of the lack of easy means of communication and differences in customs and interests, what mutual prejudices, dissensions and conflicts would undoubtedly have arisen! How increasingly difficult it would have become for them to surrender their sovereign rights to one strong central government! And yet, this is almost precisely what has occurred in Central America. No people ever stood in greater need of each other's support. Their combined resources would have supplied the elements necessary for a strong state able to

exact and maintain the same respect as Mexico and other Spanish-American states. Divided, they have staggered painfully along and been the victims of many needless misfortunes.

The large majority of the people of Central America are not turbulent in disposition or difficult to govern. On the contrary, they are as a rule submissive and peaceful to a fault. It is this very quality which has made it possible for misguided and ambitious politicians to exploit these countries. The people are not to be blamed for the unstable conditions which have so long existed. To them may be applied the observation of the French orator in reference to France in 1793: "I do not accuse the king; I do not accuse the people; I accuse the situation."

It is time that the United States, as the disinterested friend and the moral sponsor of these smaller republics, should face squarely the question whether it will any longer be an active or passive party to the perpetuation of such intolerable political conditions. Whether rightly or wrongly, other nations are inclined to hold the United States responsible for the continuation of this unsettled state of affairs. They maintain that, were it not for the Monroe Doctrine, other nations, such as England or Germany, whose financial and other interests in Central America are very great, would long ago have taken the necessary measures to ensure peace and order.

Such an intervention, with its menace of foreign protectorates and annexations, would naturally have been most offensive to the United States. Do we, on the other hand, wish to assume the obligation of supervising the domestic affairs of these Republics? Do we desire—as portended by recent interventions—to establish four or five quasi-protectorates? Surely, such a policy could only be justified when all other expedients had failed. There remains, fortunately, as a most satisfactory means of escape from an embarrassing situation, the untried solution of the union of the states of Central America.

We may consider this proposition for the establishment of the union from two aspects; first as to the probable effects of the union; and second as to how it may be brought about.

It is confidently to be expected: (1) That the disappearance of the five separate governments, with all their alluring fields for exploitation, will remove the main cause of the constant factional struggles and the wars which inevitably follow in their train. (2) The heavy financial burden of supporting five distinct governments with their elaborate administrative machinery and respective budgets, will be greatly lightened. (3) The economic and financial resources of these countries will be united for their mutual benefit in such necessary improvements as the construction of railroads to develop rich territories and bring all parts of Central America into close contact. (4) Instead of being exposed to ruinous arrangements with exacting and non-too-scrupulous syndicates, they could undertake, at a great saving, a single refunding operation for the settlement of their foreign debts and the rehabilitation of their finances. (5) With their common financial credit immensely strengthened by the cessation of wars and revolutions, they would no longer be menaced with the hypothecation of their customs revenues for the sake of foreign claimants. (6) The territorial integrity and independence of Central America will be effectively guaranteed. (7) The United States, by committing itself irrevocably to the maintenance of this independence against all aggression, would be acquitted of any suspected ambitions for territorial aggrandizement; and would win the warm approval and the confidence of all Spanish-American states.

The limits of this article, unfortunately, will not allow an elaboration of the preceding arguments. It is necessary, however, to indicate briefly how these fortunate results, which may confidently be expected from the establishment of the union, are to be safeguarded against hostile influences and disintegrating forces. The only safe insurance against such undoubted perils, particularly at the outset, would have to be found in the support of the United States. Such a protection would, in all probability, be mainly of a moral kind for the simple reason that, if it were formally declared by the United States that it would not tolerate any attempts, of whatever nature, to overthrow the newly con-

stituted government of the union, few would be so foolhardy as to undertake any aggression doomed to certain failure. If it be objected that such a responsibility would be too great, the only answer is, that, one impressive intervention by the United States, in sympathy with the aspirations of the people of Central America, is infinitely to be preferred to many, constantly recurring, interventions in the internal affairs of the separate republics.

There remains to be considered the important question as to how the union may be brought about. It obviously cannot be accomplished either by force or through the initiative of the rulers of these states. Each government is suspicious and attributes to the other ambitions for leadership and predominance. Public opinion, owing to the absence of an entirely independent and fearless, free press in these countries, cannot take the initiative in this movement. Even with public opinion fully aroused, such a movement would require disinterested leaders commanding general confidence. It is doubtful whether many such men could be found under present conditions. Such being the case, there can hardly be any room to doubt that the altruistic initiative of the United States would be welcomed with enthusiasm. Certain ambitious politicians would naturally be opposed to the project and would probably be ready to thwart it with the usual argument that these countries are not yet prepared for union. Once they realized, however, that the United States was determined to bring to bear its powerful influence in support of the union, these same politicians would unquestionably be compelled to fall into line. Though cloaking no selfish and ignoble ends, American policy—it must be admitted in all candour—has not always been entirely comprehensible to the people of Central America. They have viewed with increasing distrust and apprehension our interventions in their affairs. But in such a lofty undertaking as helping them to realize their most cherished ideal, the United States could count on their implicit confidence and gratitude.

It is not the writer's purpose to develop a complete program, indicating in detail the necessary steps which should

be taken by the United States in assuming the initiative in this movement. A few broad outlines should suffice. First, it is essential that we commit ourselves unreservedly to the principle of the imperative need of the union of the states of Central America. Second, our government should inform the governments of these Republics that it considers the union as the only adequate remedy for the ills they have so long endured, and that it is prepared to assist in every way it properly can to attain this object. Third, it should invite and induce each of the five governments to send commissioners possessing plenary powers, to a conference to be held on neutral ground, to discuss the formation of the union and to draw up the bases for the ultimate accomplishment of that end, whether at once or by progressive steps requiring, possibly, several years of preparation and re-adjustment. Such a discussion would most probably open the door to many delicate and trying questions, whose solution would require the utmost patience and the most skillful diplomacy. A consistent adherence, however, to the central principle of the need of the union, should produce tangible and effective results. There is ample room for discussion as to the precise measures required to bring about the union. But there should be no room for discussion as to its complete desirability. In the project presented to the Washington Conference in 1907 by the delegation from Honduras, is to be found a tentative program for the formation of the union, which might serve as a *point de depart* for another conference called for this purpose (Foreign Relations, 1907, p. 670).

It would be unwise to attempt to minimize the difficulties in the way of this project, nor is it possible in the limits of this article to point out the numerous and weighty factors which must be taken into consideration in this connection: for example, the relations of Mexico to Central America. Allusion should be made, however, to the attitude of Costa Rica. For more than thirty years, while the other states of Central America have been racked by internal dissensions and petty wars, Costa Rica has been entirely free from revolutions and has been able to avoid becoming embroiled

in the factional troubles and intrigues of its neighbours. This may be due to conditions peculiar to itself. It is, nevertheless, a fact which is of no little encouragement for the rest of Central America. The economic development of Costa Rica has naturally been very great, and its people have been able to enjoy marked prosperity. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why they have been unwilling, heretofore, to be drawn prematurely into any close political connection with the other states of Central America. It is possible that Costa Rica may still be indisposed to amalgamate her interests with those of her neighbours, even though the union should be brought about through the initiative and the protection of the United States. Such an attitude would be particularly lamentable inasmuch as Costa Rica would be in a position to lend the most substantial elements to the union. This should not deter the other States, however, from going ahead with the project, because the reluctant sister would be at liberty to come in whenever she might so desire, remembering that in the constitution of 1847 it was affirmed "that Costa Rica forms a part of the Central American nation and will coöperate toward its reorganization in conjunction with the other states."

Secretary Blaine fully appreciated the vital importance of the union of the Central American States as the surest remedy for their persistent maladies. His instructions of November 28, 1881, to the American minister in Mexico, in reference to aggressive attitude of that country towards Guatemala, are of especial interest as a clear enunciation of American policy.

But in reference to the union of the Central American republics, under one federal government, the United States is ready to avow that no subject appeals more strongly to its sympathy, nor more decidedly to its judgment. Nor is this a new policy. For many years this Government has urged upon the Central American States the importance of such a union to the creation of a well ordered and constitutionally governed republic and our ministers have been instructed to impress this upon the individual governments to which they have been accredited and the Central American statesmen with whom they have been associated. And we have always cherished the belief that in this effort we had the sincere sympathy

and cordial coöperation of the Mexican government. Under the conviction that the future of the people of Central America was absolutely dependent upon the establishment of a federal government which would give strength abroad and maintain peace at home, our chief motive in the recent commotion in Mexico was to prevent the diminution, either political or territorial of any of these states, in order that, trusting to the joint aid and friendship of Mexico and the United States, they might be encouraged to persist in their effort to establish a government which would, both for their advantage and ours, represent their combined wealth, intelligence and character (Foreign Relations, 1881, p. 816).

In his general instructions to the American diplomatic representatives in Central America, dated May 7, 1881, Mr. Blaine also said:

You cannot impress too strongly upon the government to which you are accredited or upon the public men with whom you associate the importance which the government of the United States attaches to such a confederation of the states of Central America as will respond to the wants and wishes of their people. Our popular maxim, that "in union there is strength," finds its counterpart in the equally manifest truth that, "in division there is weakness." So long as the Central American States remain divided they will fail to acquire the strength and prestige to which they are entitled. . . . The statesmen of Central America may feel certain that, with a common representative government, wielding the power and consulting the interests of the several States, their connection with the railway system of the continent will be eagerly sought and they will both give and receive advantages which always follow the establishment of commercial relations and political sympathy. All internal improvements, including the great project of the interoceanic canal would receive great stimulus and aid from a firm union of the Central American states and the strong government that should grow from that union (Foreign Relations, 1881, p. 102).

It is fruitless to speculate as to what Blaine might have done to forward the union, had he remained longer in power at that time. His statesmanlike vision in grasping a great idea and his boldness in carrying it into effect were demonstrated in the realization of the Pan American Union. Since his day the United States has waited patiently in the hope that the republics of Central America would be able to work out their own salvation. It would now seem certain that they cannot do so unaided. The futility of peace conferences and sentimental agreements has been proved beyond

question. The obligation of the United States towards these countries is generally recognized. Acting the ignominious part of a policeman, we are intermeddling in their domestic affairs and cannot foresee whither such a policy may lead. A courageous, radical remedy is urgently demanded. The administration at Washington, which by a measure of the highest, constructive statesmanship, is prepared to aid the people of Central America achieve their noblest ideal, will build for itself a lasting monument in the hearts of all Spanish-Americans. The United States will be freed from all aspersions of pursuing unworthy aims as well as from the perils of irksome interventions. It will be able to demonstrate irrefutably that the Monroe Doctrine does not serve to perpetuate bad government, but that its beneficent effect is to enable the people of this western hemisphere to emerge from chaotic political conditions, and unhindered to achieve their highest aspirations and destinies.